

Learning in the Leaves

Identification- Ladybird



Distinguishing Features

- Ladybugs are between 0.3 and 0.4 inches in length.
- While born black, their adult coloring can range from yellow to scarlet and the spots present on their half-sphere shaped elytra (wing coverings), vary as well.
- Their coloring is quite memorable to predators and, thus, used as a defense mechanism.
- Should that not dissuade a predator, ladybugs also secrete a foul-smelling liquid from their legs.
- For sensory perception, ladybugs sport antennae and eyes on a head that can be drawn back into the pronotum (protective casing anterior to the elytra).
- The wings protruding from the elytra are extremely thin and light, beating 85 times per second if necessary.

Interesting Facts

Ladybugs aren't really bugs. They're beetles!

According to the legend, European crops during the Middle Ages were plagued by pests. Farmers began praying to the Blessed Lady, the Virgin Mary. Soon, the farmers started seeing beneficial ladybugs in their fields, and the crops were miraculously saved from the pests. The farmers began calling the red and black beetles lady beetles. In Germany, these insects go by the name Marienkafer, which means Mary beetles. The 7-spotted lady beetle is believed to be the first named for the Virgin Mary; the red color represents her cloak, and the black spots represent her sorrows.